

Biospheric Sciences Branch Highlights for January – February 2005

**** Land Cover/Land Use Change Science Team meeting**

Nine Members of the Biospheric Sciences Branch presented research results at the NASA Headquarters' Land Cover/Land Use Change Program meeting at the University of Maryland on January 11-13. This annual meeting's purpose is to present research results, and hear about new program developments within LCLUC, related programs, and future directions. Among those presenting were Ranson, Masek, Brown de Colstoun, Tucker, Sun, Markham, and Irons.

**** Aerosol research paper citation compilation**

Three members of the Biospheric Sciences Branch (Brent Holben, Oleg Dubovik, and Alexander Smirnov) were applauded for their highly cited papers since 1998 on aerosol research pursued at GSFC. This informal Fall 2004 compilation was initiated by the Aerosol Center Seminar series in the Climate and Aerosol Branch (Code 913). The Aerosol Center was a project funded by NASA Headquarters. Of the top ten papers listed in this compilation, the Biospheric Sciences Branch members won #1, #2, #3, #5, and #10 for most cited papers in the literature from GSFC involving aerosol research.

**** Compton Tucker participates in a panel at the American Meteorological Society meeting in San Diego later carried on CSPAN**

Dr. Compton Tucker (Code 614.4) participated in a panel at the 85th annual meeting of the American Meteorological Society held January 12th in San Diego. The panel discussion entitled "The Global Earth Observation System Revolutionizing Our Understanding of How Earth Works" also included 6 panelists from universities and industry as well as the NOAA Administrator. This panel discussion was covered by CSPAN and broadcast Monday night, January 17th in its entirety.

Tucker described his group's work using AVHRR, SPOT Vegetation, MODIS, and Landsat data, all for studying ecologically linked diseases including determining if a reported outbreak of Rift Valley Fever in Yemen in 2000 was due to natural causes or a possible bio-terrorism release. He also made a case for the critical need of some type of Landsat data that presently is not available. He presented his work entitled "Link between mosquito-borne Diseases and Global Earth Observation System".

**** Steve Ungar attends meeting at HQ re: future of EO-1**

Although EO-1 officially ran out of funds on January 31, the project was instructed by NASA HQ to maintain full normal operations until February 28 using the funds reserved for de-orbiting. It is expected that a decision will be made in that time frame as to the ultimate fate of EO-1. Possibilities include de-orbiting, curtailing operations under a reduced operations budget, and transferring operations to a third party. Steve Ungar attended a meeting at NASA HQ on Thursday, February 2, where the topic being explored was a long standing request by the Argentine Space Agency (CONAE) to operate EO-1 should NASA decide to terminate the mission while EO-1 was still fully functional. Gran Paules led the discussion with representatives of CONAE including Dr. C. Varotta, Executive Director of CONAE. Follow up discussions with CONAE ground station management is slated to take place on Friday, Feb 4. Steve Ungar, mission scientist, and Dan Mandl, operations manager, will be senior representatives for the EO-1 project.

**** Flora Meeting is attended by several members of the Biospheric Sciences Branch**

The first Flora Science Team Meeting / Formulation Workshop was held on Feb 15 at the Carnegie Institution's historic headquarters building in downtown Washington DC. Greg Asner, Flora PI, arranged for us to use the Carnegie Board Room for this meeting. Greg also arranged for the president of the Carnegie Institution, Richard Meserve (former head of Nuclear Regulatory Commission), to greet everyone at 9am with a few opening remarks. In addition, President Meserve met over coffee with senior mission personnel at 8:30am. A follow-up meeting, centered on Carbon Modeling issues, took place at GSFC on the morning of Feb 16. Following this meeting, Greg delivered a well-attended special seminar on Flora Science from 2 to 3 pm in room H114.